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ABSTRACT

Vocational educators are using the Internet in various ways. The director and associate professor of vocational-technical education at Dakota State University uses the Internet primarily for electronic mail. Students in a secondary vocational teacher's international trade and marketing class have participated in real-time conferences with schools in Finland, Israel, and many places in the United States. Students in the University of Florida counseling program use e-mail, search the World Wide Web (WWW) for information, and have group e-mail sessions. Advantages of using the Internet include the following: ability to arouse students' interest, ease of communication among teachers for sharing ideas, availability of new resources, potential to develop new relationships all over the world, and possibility of interaction with experts. Problems are antiquated hardware and software; lack of technical and curriculum support; lack of coherent structure, stability, and documentation; and lack of training, censorship, and quality control. (This digest includes lists of listservs, newsgroups, WWW sites, addresses, and electronic journals and newsletters of interest to vocational educators. Contains seven references.) (YLB)

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Using the Internet in Vocational Education
ERIC Digest No. 160

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DIGEST
NO. 160

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education

Using the Internet in Vocational Education

by Judith O. Wagner

1995

EDO-CE-95-160

"It is an exciting time in education. The Internet offers new opportunities for students and teachers a link to learn in interesting ways" (Ellsworth 1994, p. xxiii). "Telecommunications truly is one of the most exciting educational tools I have encountered in my teaching career" (Watson 1994, p. 41). "The Internet's usefulness is limited only by our level of commitment. We first have to get plugged in before we can get turned on. Then we can help our profession by using our imagination to create a vocational educator's Dream Net in the years to come" (Seguin and Seguin 1995, p. 33).

The Internet is a vast computer-based network of networks that includes listservs and newsgroups—discussion forums on specific topics—as well as electronic mail and electronic journals. It is used in education, business, and leisure, and students must be able to navigate it to become prepared citizens. This ***ERIC Digest*** does not pretend to be an exhaustive list of vocational education resources on the Internet—the list changes daily. It offers suggestions for using the Internet in the vocational classroom and lists newsgroups, World Wide Web (WWW) sites, listservs, and electronic journals of interest to vocational educators. It also serves as a supplement to an ERIC Key, ***Locating ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education Materials on the Internet.***

Much of the material for this Digest was received as a result of a message sent to the VOCNET listserv asking how vocational educators were using the Internet in their classrooms. Responses varied widely. Many of the respondents indicated that they were just getting started with the Internet and using it primarily for sending messages. Some students have joined listservs and newsgroups; others have surfed the 'Net for information and materials from all over the world.

Examples of Current Use

The director and associate professor of vocational-technical education at Dakota State University uses the Internet primarily for e-mail. He requires students to send queries to AskERIC; in his "Technology in Voc Ed" course, graduate students have to use the WWW and sign up for a listserv. He is considering offering a course for vocational education personnel entirely through the Internet (A. Seguin, Internet message, June 20, 1995).

Cognitive Training Associates, Inc. develops and uses networks for large corporations. They use the Internet to distribute technology-based training applications—mostly core skill acquisition and reinforcement, knowledge transfer and sharing, and use of job-specific smart applications that perform lower-level tasks and provide on-demand expertise (M. Brown, Internet message, June 20, 1995).

A secondary vocational teacher in Charlotte, North Carolina, is planning to use the Internet in her international trade and marketing class. The students have participated in real-time conferences with schools in Finland, Israel, and many places in the United States, studying such topics as farm subsidies, economic development, the European Union, and trade issues. Through a Junior Achievement project, **Globe**, her class will be exporting and importing products from a class in another country (C. Rainwater, Internet message, June 20, 1995).

The Technical Integration Project coordinator at a Maryland high school assigned seniors to write a research paper related to their trade area. Working with a local community college, she and her students used their resources, library, and online workstations. The resource center personnel provided instruction in research and use of the Maryland Internet connection. Students downloaded materials, joined listservs, and communicated with others on the Internet to get the information they needed. The WWW is their next step (R. A. Fitzgerald, Internet message, June 19, 1995).

Students in the University of Florida counseling program use e-mail, surf the WWW for information, and have group e-mail sessions. The "ticket" to their final exam was to find Universal Resource Locators (URLs) that were career related as well as some that were just for fun. Plans for next year include matching beginning students with experienced counselors who are using a developmental approach via e-mail (R. Myrick, Internet message, June 25, 1995).

Students at a high school in Calgary, Alberta, exchange mail with people all over the world, subscribe to listservs and newsgroups, and use Internet Relay Chat (IRC) to converse with others in real time over the Internet. They make friends and learn about other cultures, lifestyles, and philosophies. Students have located software for a Japanese language course, searched for resources to use in assignments, and introduced a new discussion group (Hanson 1994).

The Texas Education Agency Quality Workforce Planning program runs a statewide newsgroup for Texas teachers. They use the state's gopher/Web site for statewide priority occupations and regional targeted occupations lists which are heavily used at the State Employment (Security) Commission's Telnet bulletin board system. They distribute materials via e-mail to tech prep and Quality Work Force Planning locations (D. Kinnaman, Internet message, June 26, 1995).

An agricultural education teacher suggests that technology must follow and facilitate the curriculum while helping students and teachers reach their goals. Some of the reasons cited for going online include access to a tremendous amount of information, the ability to communicate with others who share specific interests, and the fact that it motivates students (Murphy 1994).

Potential and Problems

Advantages of using the Internet include its ability to arouse the interest of students, the ease of communication among teachers for sharing ideas, the availability of new resources, and the potential to develop new relationships all over the world (Pool et al. 1995). The Internet also offers the possibility of interaction with experts (P. McCorkle, Internet message, July 18, 1995). Telecommunications, specifically the Internet, are potentially the most significant educational tools to come along in quite a while. However, there are problems such as making sure that the tech-

nology is used in educationally appropriate ways. Too often people worry more about the accessibility of the Internet to all students than about using it effectively in their classrooms (Maddux 1994). Other problems include antiquated hardware and software particularly in elementary schools, lack of technical and curriculum support, lack of coherent structure, stability, and documentation, lack of training, censorship, and quality control (Maddux 1994; Murphy 1995).

Addresses, Listservs, Usenet Newsgroups, Electronic Journals, and WWW Sites

Listservs are automated mailing lists of people with a similar interest. They are used for transmitting news, searching for information, and networking. All messages are sent to members' mailboxes. Following are some listservs that are of interest to vocational educators.

AAAE	aaae@purccvm.bitnet (American Association for Agricultural Education)
AEDNET	aednet@pulsar.acast.nova.edu (adult and continuing education)
AUTOCAD	autocad@jhuvm.bitnet (AUTOCAD discussion list)
BATECH-L	batech-l@psuvm.psu.edu (Technologies in Business Education)
BUSED-L	bused-l@uregina1.bitnet (discussion of business education teaching practices)
COMMCOLL	commcoll@ukcc.uky.edu (for faculty, staff, and administrators at two-year institutions)
DISSMN8	dissemn8@cmsa.berkeley.edu (National Educational Dissemination System)
EDPOLYAN	edpolyan@asuacad.bitnet (education policy analysis)
FL-STWTP	fl-stwtp@mailer.fsu.edu (Florida School-to-Work Clearinghouse)
NBEA	nbea-l@akronvm.bitnet (National Business Education Association)
NWAC-L	nwac-l@psuvm.psu.edu (National Workforce Assistance Collaborative)
STWNET	majordomo@confer.edc.org (School-to-Work Network)
S2WTP	majordomo@cccins.cccneb.edu (School-to-work/ tech prep)
SIGTEL-L	sigtel-l@unmvma.bitnet (Special Interest Group/ Telecommunications of ISTE)
TCC-L	tcc-l@uhccvm.bitnet (teaching in the community college)
TECHNOLOGY-EDU	technology-edu@ncsu.edu (technology education)
TRDEV-L	trdev-l@psuvm.psu.edu (training and development)
VOCNET	vocnet@cmsa.berkeley.edu (National Center for Research in Vocational Education)

Usenet is a distributed message system that exchanges messages among subscriber sites (Ellsworth 1994). Newsgroups of interest to vocational educators include the following:

alt.education.distance	misc.education
alt.sewing	misc.education.adult
comp.cad.autocad	rec.autos.antique
k12.ed.business	rec.autos.tech
k12.ed.life.skills	rec.food.cooking

The World Wide Web allows the possible integration of full-color graphics, varying typefaces, animation, and sound (Seguin and Seguin 1995). WWW sites of interest include—

http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu:80/teis	Universal resource locator
http://ericir.syr.edu	AskERIC
http://www.fsu.edu/~flstwtp/fl-stwtp.html	Florida School-to-Work Clearinghouse
http://lycos.cs.cmu.edu/	Search for keywords throughout the Web
http://vocserve.berkeley.edu/	National Center for Research in Vocational Education
http://www.corptech.com:3600/spotmenu.htm	Employment for the U.S. high technology industry
http://www.ed.gov	National Library of Education (through the U.S. Department of Education)
http://www.ncrel.org/ncrel/sdrs/pathways.htm	North Central Regional Educational Laboratory
http://www.nhmccd.cc.tx.us:80/groups/stw/	Texas Tool Box from North Harris Montgomery Community College District
http://www.petersons.com	The Education Center, Peterson's Guides
http://www.yahoo.com	A catalog of the WWW

Internet addresses to try for information on additional resources include:

askeric@ericir.syr.edu	AskERIC
carlson@uclink.berkeley.edu	National Center for Research in Vocational Education
ericacve@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu	ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education
psupen@psu.edu	PENN PAGES

Many electronic journals and newsletters are available over the Internet. A few are listed here.

CATALYST	listserv@vtvm1.cc.vt.edu (refereed journal for community college educators)
DEOSNEWS	listserv@psuvm.psu.edu (American Journal of Distance Education)
EDUPAGE	edupage@educom.edu (information technology news)
EUITNEWS	listserv@bitnic.educom.edu (Educational Uses of Information Technology)
HORIZONS	listserv@pulsar.acast.nova.edu (New Horizons in Adult Education)
JOE	almanac@joe.uwex.edu (Journal of Extension)
JTE-L	listserv@vtvm1.cc.vt.edu (Journal of Technology Education)
TCC-J	listproc@hawaii.edu (Teaching in the Community Colleges)

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Murphy, T. "Merging Your Classroom onto the Information Superhighway." ***Agricultural Education Magazine*** 67, no. 2 (August 1994): 6-8.

Pool, T. S.; Blanchard, S. M.; and Hale, S. A. "From over the Internet." ***TechTrends*** 40, no. 1 (January-February 1995): 24-28. (EJ 497 975)

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